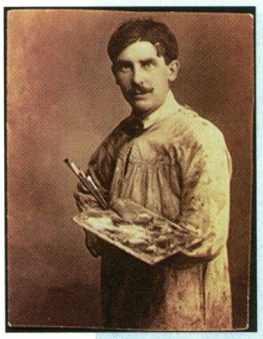
Committee will assess the impact on health of contaminants including radionuclides, persistent organic toxics, and toxic metals. The Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna Committee will compile lists of endangered species and environmentally protected areas. The Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment Committee will survey land-based sources of pollution and establish guidelines for environmentally sound development including that of offshore oil drilling. Finally, the Emergency Prevention, Preparedness, and Response Committee will assess emergency notification systems and compile a risk matrix that identifies environmental risk factors and their significance.

According to Robert Senseney, polar affairs chief for the U.S. State Department, the Arctic Council is negotiating rules of procedure and guidelines for emergency preparedness and sustainable development. "Emphasis is on a proactive approach and involves consultation with industry, governments, and environmental groups," says Senseney. Voting members of the council are high-level government representatives from Canada, Denmark (voting also for Greenland), Finland, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden, and the United States. There are also nonvoting permanent participants including the Inuit Circumpolar Conference; the Saami Council (Laplanders); and the Association of the Indigenous Minorities of the North, Siberia, and the Far East of the Russian Federation. The Arctic Council will not produce legally binding treaties or deal with military security.

Sierra Club Chairman Mike McCloskey says that danger signals such as problems in polar bear reproduction and evidence of tropical pesticides in Arctic ice have prompted requests for more research on pollution levels and transport in the Arctic. Environmental issues arising from events such as the opening of the Northwest Passage to maritime shipping and the development of renewable resources, says Mary Simon, Canadian ambassador for circumpolar affairs, have also contributed to the need for more funding of Arctic research. The council is also committed to improving the economic conditions, health, and cultural well-being of indigenous people, so it will work to develop policies on issues such as contamination of the food chain, maintaining animal populations, and sustaining indigenous lifestyles that depend on fishing and hunting.



EHPnet

Painting a Healthier Picture

The health hazards associated with art may seem like an issue that affects only a few members of society—individuals who devote their lives to spending long hours in often small, poorly ventilated studios, often working with toxic materials, to create paintings and sculptures. Though the risk of exposure to toxic art materials may be greatest for professional artists, the many people who draw, paint, process photographs, or work with ceramics as a hobby can also be exposed to toxic chemicals and harmful dusts. In addition, many secondary schools offer art classes that use these same materials, and warnings such as the one issued by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission in 1994 concerning lead in crayons serve as reminders that even children can be at risk.

Since 1977, the Center for Safety in the Arts (CSA) has supported research and disseminated information on the health hazards associated with both the visual and performing arts. Due to cuts in federal and state funding, the center discontinued many of its research and teaching programs in 1995, but its World Wide Web site located at http://artsnet.heinz.cmu.edu:70/1/csa/ continues to be maintained and is one of the best and most readily available resources available on art-related health hazards.

The CSA site, which is maintained by the New York Foundation for the Arts, consists of articles, data sheets, and information on other resources that deal with the health risks faced by artists. To make it easier to determine what exposures a particular artist should be wary of, the center provides links to groups of papers divided into separate sections for visual artists, school children, museum curators, and performing artists. All of these can be accessed by following the Art Hazards Menu link on the center's main menu. Through this link, users can connect to another link labeled *Arts Hazards News* Issues. Published five times a year until the 1995 funding cuts, the *Arts Hazards News* was the CSA newsletter, providing artists with timely updates on the dangers they faced. Since publication has stopped, the CSA has added all back issues to their Web site, and these newsletters continue to be a good source of information on topics ranging from the safety of different materials to alternatives to using toxic chemicals.

Information on specific toxic materials such as solvents and flammables can be found by following the General Hazards Menu link on the center's main menu. Information on multiple chemical sensitivity, indoor air quality, and fire prevention can also be found here. The Precautions Menu link on the CSA home page takes the user to a list of links to documents on topics such as respirators, gloves, ventilation, and other means of avoiding contact with hazardous substances. The Laws & Regulations Menu link connects users to 15 articles that discuss National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health and Occupational Safety and Health Administration standards for workplace safety. The CSA home page also allows access to other related World Wide Web and gopher sites via two links on the main menu.

The last item on the CSA main menu is a link to an internal search engine that allows users to search for key words in the titles of documents on the CSA site.